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Talented Me. The Great State of Maine Summer Theatres

Maine Department of Economic Development

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THEATER MUSEUM

One of the finest private collections of theater momentos in the United States is located in the Boothbay Playhouse Theater Museum, the only museum of its kind associated with an operating theater in the Nation. Assembled by producer-director Franklyn Lenthall, the collection contains rare playbills, prints, portraits, photographs, figurines, sculpture, costumes, jewelry, glass, and other items associated with the great actors, and the theater past and present. OPEN DAILY from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. during July and August.

Since part of the large collection has been on display at the Boothbay Playhouse, patrons of the theater have presented additional objects for exhibit. From time to time, segments of the collection have been loaned for special exhibitions at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Connecticut, and to various museums in New York City. The displays are found throughout the theater and Lounge, as well as in the special cases at the rear of the Lounge.

Recent acquisitions include two groups of sculpture by John Rogers for which Edwin Booth posed, rare porcelain figurines of Punch and Judy and other "theater personalities," a group of Oriental theatrical objects, a ring worn by Katherine Cornell in Shaw's "The Doctor's Dilemma," an autographed photograph by Karsh of Miss Cornell, Spanish rosary beads and a travel clock owned by Sarah Bernhardt, a pair of rare and early Commedien dell'Arte figurines, a figurine of Sir John Gielgud as Ernest in "The Importance of Being Earnest," a tin candle lantern used to light playgoers to the balcony of the old National Theater in Boston, portrait busts of playwrights Ibsen and Bjornson, a pair of girandoles with brass figures of Edwin Forrest as Metamora, and a Hogarth colored engraving dated 1838 of a troupe of actors.



THIS VACATION PLANNER

is designed as an introduction to summer theater in Maine. Detailed information has been provided wherever possible but a printing of this nature cannot include specific box office information. As an aid in planning your visit, we have included sources for additional information and suggest you contact the individual theater or groups for specific schedules of shows.

One in a series of Vacation Planners programmed by the Maine Department of Economic Development, available from 78 Gateway Circle, Portland, Maine 04102. Prospective visitors to Maine are interested in the "facts", and these brochures are designed with this in mind. We would appreciate receiving your comments.

Please write:

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Talented Me.

The Great State of Maine
Summer Theatres



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SUMMER THEATER

High on the list of summertime attractions in the Pine Tree State are the various offerings of the extremely active summer theaters. From June to September, hundreds of actors, actresses and stage hands are busy each day working on productions in playhouses across the state.

A typical summer will find the vacationer with as many as 45 different shows to choose from. The variety of playhouses and locations permits the vacationer to choose between comedy, serious drama and sparkling musical fare on almost any night.

The theatergoer in Maine may select an evening revisiting an old friend, seeing a recent Broadway hit, or enjoying an exciting new experience watching the performance of one of the works by contemporary international playwrights.

Whatever the individual's preferences, he can be assured of a delightful evening's entertainment when he purchases a ticket to a summer theater performance in Maine.

GENERAL HISTORY

Maine is the birthplace of summer theater, an integral part of summertime activities up and down the Atlantic seaboard which continues to grow with every new season. According to old newspaper accounts, summer theater got its start in Maine when it was available at Peak's Island, near Portland, in 1887.

The first summer theater on the mainland was Lakewood Theater, the grand-daddy of summer theaters and the oldest summer theater in the Nation in terms of continuous operation. Lakewood, which was designated the Official Theater of the State of Maine in 1967, has been delighting audiences since 1901.

Formerly an old Indian camp site on the shores of Lake Wesserunnett, Lakewood first charmed an audience on June 15, 1901, when it offered a live performance of "The Private Secretary." Lakewood is also one of the largest summer theaters in the East with its seating capacity of just over 1,000.

Lakewood gained early prominence as a try-out site for new productions on their way to Broadway. Among the many shows which were tried at Lakewood were "Life With Father" and "Never Too Late." The former broke all Broadway records with a total of 3,224 performances and the latter enjoyed a very successful run of 1,007 performances in New York.

Since its inception, Lakewood has presented over 850 productions and its famous footlights have illuminated numerous theatrical greats. The renowned Ethel Barrymore, Humphrey Bogart, Ginger Rogers, Jessica Tandy, and Walter Pidgeon are just a handful of the many notables who have donned greasepaint at the famous old theater.

"The Straw Hat Circuit" in Maine has become increasingly active over the years. Though resident stock companies have largely given way to the package productions with big-name stars and polished professional performances, Maine's summer theater still offers both types to the vacationer.

A new dimension in recent years has been added by the emergence of several small companies of young actors. These non-Equity groups have become increasingly plentiful and popular. The new theater groups operate out of old movie houses, converted barns, or any other space that is available to them with adequate seating capacity. The air of intimacy and informality of these productions is very refreshing in an age which has seen television assume so much of the responsibility for the dramatic arts.

The new summer theaters have a special sort of magnetism all their own with enthusiastic actors who are just getting their professional feet planted, and summer audiences respond warmly to these less polished productions.

PROFESSIONAL THEATERS

BOOTHBAY PLAYHOUSE

Route 27, Wiscasset Road, Boothbay, Me. 04537
Resident dramatic stock company.
Information: Phone 633-3550

BRUNSWICK MUSIC THEATER

Route 1, Brunswick, Me. 04011
Musical repertory theater.
Information: Phone 725-8769

KENNEBUNKPORT PLAYHOUSE

River Road, Kennebunkport, Me. 04046
Information: Phone Chamber of Commerce, 985-3608

LAKEWOOD THEATER

Route 201, Skowhegan, Me. 04976
Late Broadway plays with big-name stars, packaged productions.
Information: Phone 474-3331

OGUNKUIT PLAYHOUSE

Route 1, Ogunquit, Me. 03907
Broadway plays and musicals with big-name stars, packaged productions.
Information: Phone 646-5511

PUBLICATIONS AND INFORMATION SOURCES

Cultural Heritage and Horizons--
Maine Commission on the Arts & Humanities,
State House, Augusta, Maine 04330

Other Information and Publications about Maine:

Maine Department of Economic Development
State Office Building, Augusta, Maine 04330

Maine Publicity Bureau
78 Gateway Circle, Portland, Maine 04102

State of Maine Information Center
48 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City, N. Y. 10020

State of Maine Information Center
Laurentien Hotel, Dominion, Montreal, Canada

Other Information Centers:

Jct. of U. S. Rt. 1 & Me. Turnpike, Kittery, Maine
Bass Park, Bangor, Maine

U. S. Rt. 302, Fryeburg, Maine (summer only)

Maine Turnpike, North
Cumberland, Maine (summer only)

Internat'l Bridge, Calais, Maine (summer only)

All Local Chamber of Commerce Offices

NON-EQUITY THEATER

In recent years, a number of theater groups have been formed each summer in various parts of the state. Some of these groups are still seeking permanent homes and others need stronger financial support. For the benefit of prospective vacationers, a partial list of these groups is furnished below with addresses. Local Chamber of Commerce offices will be happy to provide more detailed information on performances.

Deertrees Theater:

Harrison, Me. 04040

Downeast Players:

Ram Island Art Center, Cape Elizabeth, Me. 04107
Theater at Monmouth:

Cumston Hall, Monmouth, Me. 04259

Thomas Playhouse:

Route 302, South Casco, Me. 04077-Phone 655-3562